Application for Planning Permission for: -

Two-storey rear extension, alterations to rear elevation and roof, and landscaping works to front & rear gardens, to include external terraces at raised ground, first floor, and roof level, in connection with refurbishment of (currently derelict) existing single family dwellinghouse, at:

195 Prince of Wales Road
London NW5 3QB

# Design, Access & Heritage Statement

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Revision 'A' – 12 August 2021

## 1. Buildings Description and Site Context

195 Prince of Wales Road is a terraced stucco-fronted Victorian townhouse property located towards the west end of Prince of Wales Road where it joins Haverstock Hill. The house is on the south side of the road and directly opposite Queens Crescent which leads north towards Gospel Oak. The property, from its appearance and detailing, would most likely date from around 1860. It appears, along with its immediate neighbours to west and east, on the OS Town Plan: London 1:1056 map of 1873.

The house has three storeys above street level with a lower ground floor level below. It is constructed of yellow London stock brickwork (visible to chimney stacks and the rear elevation) and is stucco fronted to the lower half of the main street elevation. The brickwork to the upper level street elevation is painted. Lower ground and raised ground floor levels have a projecting three sided bay to the front, surmounted with a small dentil cornice. The stucco features horizontal 'ashlar' banding. A pair of front facing windows to each of the first and second floors have architraved surrounds; the first floor windows with additional curved pediments over. A large dentil cornice is located at the top of the main elevation, just below a rendered parapet, which previously concealed a London roof.

The house forms part of a long terrace of identical properties. 193 immediately to the east is at the same level; 197 on the other side is higher by approximately 50cm.

The building is not statutorily listed, but the terrace appears on Camden's 'local list' of historic buildings that make a positive contribution to their surroundings. The site is not part of a Conservation Area.

Google Earth aerial view of the site and its surroundings

The property was previously in use as a single family dwelling, but has been derelict since 2017 when it was partly destroyed by fire. Apart from the Local List designation, there do not appear to be any other noteworthy site-specific planning policies.

## 2. Planning History

The application site has not been the subject of any recent or historic planning applications. Before the fire, the property appears to have been largely unaltered since construction.

## 3. Photographs


Existing front elevation

Existing front elevation

Existing front elevation

Existing rear elevation

Existing rear elevation

Existing rear elevation

Existing rear garden

Existing condition internally

Existing condition internally

## 4. The Proposed Development

The unfortunate recent history of the property is well known in the local area and the two fires in 2017 were extensively documented in the local press. The applicant, who has very recently purchased the property from its previous owner, recognises the inconvenience and disruption to neighbouring residents, and the negative effect on the appearance and character of the local area, that has been caused by the property remaining in a derelict state for a prolonged period. Now the sale has gone through they are keen to proceed as quickly as reasonably possible with reconstruction and refurbishment work to restore the house as a single family dwelling for their own use.

The condition of the building internally is in such disrepair, due both to the fire damage and the effects of the interior being open to the weather for four years, that nothing is salvageable and the internal parts of the property will need to be reconstructed from scratch. The front and rear elevations have been inspected by a structural engineer and thankfully the brickwork, stucco, and decorative mouldings appear not too badly damaged. Temporary works are now underway to stabilise the front and rear elevations; debris and damaged fabric will then be removed from inside the property to allow the alteration and reconstruction works to proceed promptly following receipt of the necessary approvals.

The need to substantially reconstruct large parts of the building fabric will clearly add to the scope and complexity of building works required, but also present an important opportunity for the refurbished building to meet or surpass current standards of thermal efficiency and acoustic insulation, and to incorporate leading-edge and sustainable technology such as a ground source heat pump, whole house ventilation system with heat recovery, residential sprinklers, and a biodiverse green roof.

## 5. Design Statement

5.1 Street elevation

In recognition of the building's status as a locally-listed heritage asset, the intention is that the street elevation will be restored as faithfully as possible to its original condition. Stucco and decorative detailing will be repaired and redecorated; brickwork to the upper part of the street elevation will be cleaned of paint and repointed. New windows will be period correct traditionally weighted sliding sash windows in painted timber, incorporating slim double glazed units. Internal decorative detail to the windows such as mouldings and shutters will be salvaged and refurbished if at all possible. The main entrance door will also be assessed and salvaged if possible; if it does need to be replaced, a new door in painted hardwood will be installed to a period appropriate raised-and-fielded six panel design, in a new frame with glazed overpanel to match the existing door.

5.2 Rear extension and rear elevation

The existing rear elevation of the property is a far less refined design and is also much less prominent - it is only visible from the public realm from a short length of Haverstock Hill at a distance of over fifty metres away, and then only the upper part of the elevation can be seen. A key aspect of the original design philosophy is apparent both from the lack of any decorative detail as applied to the front elevation, and the centrally located rain water downpipe running vertically from roof level: namely, that the rear elevation was considered of secondary importance compared to the street elevation. Further drainage pipework has since been added

to the rear elevation of the property as bathrooms were added internally, likely in the 1950s or 1960s. As such, we feel it should be acceptable for the building to be extended to the rear, and for alterations to be made to the rear elevation, in order to arrive at an optimal arrangement of space and function to suit the applicant's needs.

The terrace has an established pattern of two-storey part-width rear outriggers measuring 3 metres in depth measured from the rear elevation of the main body of the house. From reference to historic Ordnance Survey plans, these appear to be original. On most of the properties in the terrace, the flat roofs of these outriggers at first floor level have had metal railings added and are in use as small external terraces.

A number of other properties in the terrace have been the subject of building work to construct rear extensions, notably:

> 197 Prince of Wales Road which has a three-storey rear extension which is full width at lower ground and raised ground levels and part-width at first floor level, with external terraces at first floor and second floor levels, and a projecting balcony at upper ground floor level with an external staircase leading down to the garden.
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> 199 Prince of Wales Road which has a three-storey rear extension increasing the depth and height of the original part-width rear outrigger, with an external terrace at first floor level, and also a roof extension with an external terrace at third floor level (roof level).
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> 179 Prince of Wales Road which has a two-storey full width rear extension.
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> 175 Prince of Wales Road which has had an additional storey added to its original two-storey height rear outrigger.

Our proposed drawings for the application property show the existing part-width rear outrigger being replaced with a two storey height full width rear extension. The extension at upper ground floor level will be three metres deep, to match the depth of the existing rear outrigger to the application property and its neighbours. The extension at lower ground level will be slightly deeper on plan at 4.5 metres deep. This allows for a small amount of external amenity space to be provided at upper ground level, adjacent to the main living areas of the house.

Due to the rearrangement of the internal floor levels, the rear extension is proposed to be around one metre taller than the existing rear outrigger. As shown on the proposed rear elevation drawing included with the application, the height of the extension complies with the '45 degree rule' in elevation (as set out in the BRE guide 'Site Layout and Planning for Daylight & Sunlight: A Good Practice Guide [1991]) in respect of the adjacent rear facing window at upper ground floor level at 193 Prince of Wales Road; as such any effect on natural light levels to the corresponding room in the neighbouring property is likely to fall within acceptable limits. The existing rear outrigger already breaches the 45 degree rule in elevation for the lower ground level window, and on plan for both windows; this situation will not be made materially worse by the proposed extension.

On the opposite side, 197 Prince of Wales Road already has a two storey height three metre deep extension to the boundary line, with a projecting balcony beyond that at upper ground level, so should not be affected in terms of light levels or sense of enclosure by the proposed works.

It should also be noted that the rear elevation of the terrace faces due south with a wide, clear space behind it; there is a separation of over 50 metres to Haverstock School buildings which are lower in height and also further down the hill. As such, the rear elevation of the the terrace is something of a 'sun trap' and receives unobstructed, direct sunlight for much of the day.

We do not anticipate any significant effect on neighbours' natural light levels or sense of enclosure from the one metre increase in height of the rear extension, or the 1.5 metre increase in depth at lower ground floor level, compared to the existing rear outrigger.

The rear extension will be faced in reclaimed yellow London stock brickwork to match the existing rear elevation. The rear facing doors at upper ground floor level and lower ground floor level are proposed as large sliding doors in powder coated aluminium to maximise natural light levels in the building interior. Openings for windows to the upper floor levels have been sized to match typical dimensions of existing openings to the application property and its neighbours.

5.4 Alterations at roof level

The existing roof was destroyed in the fire, and so complete reconstruction is required. Although the original roof followed the typical London pattern, with monopitches on both sides sloping down to a central gutter running front to back, the roof shape was concealed behind parapets to both front and rear elevations. As such, the roof shape by itself cannot be said to be a decisive factor in the building's positive contribution to the local townscape. Although the terrace benefits from being locally listed by Camden, it is not statutorily listed and therefore we feel there should not be an automatic presumption to reinstate the original roof form. There is none of the original roof structure remaining in a salvageable state, so also no argument can be made that historic structure could or should be retained.

The terrace is prominent in long views from Queens Crescent, Haverstock Hill, and further down Prince of Wales Road. Although the existing, boxy roof extension at 199 Prince of Wales Road projects above the parapet and cornice line at the end of the terrace, this line is otherwise uninterrupted for the length of the terrace and ties the buildings together. As such, we have taken the view that the proposed works at roof level should not project above the front parapet.

In constructing a new roof, the applicant would like to take the opportunity to include an area of wildflower biodiverse green roofing system. This will help them to meet their own aspirations to maximise the ecological credentials of the project, as well as providing tangible benefits to wildlife and the local ecosystem.

There are a number of strategies that can be followed to maximise the development of biodiversity from an extensive green roof system, as follows:

- Modulating the surface substrate; this creates different habitats that will extend the range of species available in the planting areas.
- Including sand pockets and coarse gravel beds; these are used by insects and other roof inhabitants as a hideaway, breeding ground and sun trap.
- Borders and sheeting can be used to retain stormwater on the roof for a time; this improves the availability of water for insects and birds.
- Areas of deeper substrate can be used to include forage plants for insects and birds.
- Nesting aids can be used specifically to foster insect colonisation.

- Deadwood can be included for use as a habitat for moss, lichens, fungi, beetles, flies, midges, ants, and wild bees.

A design for the green roof will be prepared by a specialist. The applicants would accept a condition requiring details of the green roof installation to be approved by the Authority, and installed prior to occupation of the house, if this is deemed necessary.

Any roof requires periodic maintenance; a green roof system of the type proposed requires attention on a yearly or twice-yearly basis, primarily to dead-head the flowers and re-seed. As such it is appropriate to include a permanent, safe means of accessing the roof as part of the new construction. This will be provided by means of a fixed staircase leading up to a hinged rooflight set just above the surface of the fat roof and well below the front and rear parapets.

The existing rear garden at the property is quite small for a family sized property, measuring only about 35 square metres. As such the applicant would like to include a small external amenity area at roof level. This is modestly sized and as shown on the proposed section drawing, the level of the flat roof is set below the level of the rear parapet – as such, a prominent balustrade or guarding will not be required above the parapet. This roof terrace is intended for use by the occupants of the second floor master bedroom, and as shown on the plans is accessed through the master suite.

It is noted that there is already an external terrace in an equivalent location at 199 Prince of Wales Road. There is also an existing rear facing external terrace at second floor level at 197 Prince of Wales Road.

The rear elevations of the properties on the east side of Haverstock Hill are 20 metres (at closest) from the proposed external terrace. As this exceeds the 18 metre separation distance contained within Camden's Amenity CPG, there should be adequate separation for the purposes of ensuring neighbours' privacy is maintained.

5.6 Lower ground floor works

The existing lower ground level has a restricted ceiling height of around 2.2 metres. This ceiling height is significantly lower than the recommended minimum ceiling height of 2.5 metres (and recommended 2.6 metres in habitable rooms) contained in the Mayor of London's Housing Design Quality & Standards supplementary planning guidance pre-consultation draft, published 2020.

As such, to make best use of the footprint of the building at lower ground level and ensure an acceptable quality of space in the proposed lower ground floor reception room, the proposals include a 50cm lowering of the existing floor level over the rear half of the lower ground floor level, and a small area of the rear garden immediately adjacent to the rear of the house.

While this will involve an amount of excavation, in the context of the project as a whole, the degree of lowering and the extent of the lowered area are felt to be appropriate and not excessive. The decision only to lower the rear half of the lower ground floor also has the advantage that the depth of lightwell at the front of the property can be maintained as existing, avoiding any manifestation of the internal change in levels being visible from the public realm.

The area to be lowered (internally and externally) measures around 55 square metres; as such, a half metre of excavation would generate 27.5 cubic metres of spoil. This equates to 36 cubic yards, the contents of three standard 12 cubic yard skips. If at all

possible we will look to reuse some of this on site as part of the landscaping scheme to the rear garden.

5.7 Landscaping

A detailed scheme for soft landscaping will be worked out by a specialist landscape consultant or gardener in due course. At present there is limited access to the rear garden and the space is so overgrown that a proper survey of the existing planting stock cannot yet be carried out.

The intention for the rear garden is that existing mature plants be kept if at all possible. The rear garden will be planned to include trees that will help to shade the rear elevation of the building, improve privacy, attenuate sound, provide a habitat for wildlife, and a pleasant view from the rear facing windows of the application site and its neighbours.

The proposed layout of the front garden space has been carefully considered to provide good access to the lower ground floor, and storage for bicycles and refuse, along with a good level of planting.

The front garden will also be the location for the ground source heat pump. This consists of a coil of pipework installed in a borehole below ground, which will not be visible following completion of the works. The remaining parts of the installation – pump and heat exchanger - will be located in an adjacent internal space at lower ground floor level.

## 6. The proposal in relation to planning policy

Reference has been made to the following planning policies and supplementary guidance:

Camden Local Plan [2017]

- Policy H3 Protecting Existing Homes
- Policy H6 Housing Choice and Mix
- Policy H7 Large and Small Homes

- Policy A1 Managing the Impact of Development
- Policy A3 Biodiversity
- Policy A5 Basements

- Policy D1 Design
- Policy D2 Heritage

- Policy CC1 Climate Change Mitigation
- Policy CC2 Adapting to Climate Change
- Policy CC3 Water and Flooding
- Policy CC5 Waste

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

- Home Improvements CPG (2021)
- Amenity CPG [2021]
- Biodiversity CPG [2018]
- Basements CPG [2021]
- Camden Climate Action Plan 2020-2025 [2020]

Mayor of London's Housing Design Quality & Standards SPG pre-consultation draft [2020]

The proposed alterations are considered to comply with the Council's and other applicable policies, and to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the application property, the surrounding area, and the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

## 7. Flood Risk

The site is not in an identified Local Flood Risk Zone as shown on Camden's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment map [2014]. Camden South (covering the area from Belsize Park through Camden to central London) is considered to be of much lower risk of flooding compared to areas in the north of the borough (Camden Flood Risk Management Strategy document [2013]).

As such the proposals are not considered to need any special precautions against flooding, or to contribute significantly to any existing flood risk.

## 8. Heritage Statement

A brief summary of the building's architectural features and heritage is included in section 1 above. The principal alterations for which approval is sought in this application are described in section 5 above, together with an assessment of their impact (in heritage and other terms).

The building forms an integral part of an attractive and imposing Victorian terrace which has been locally-listed by Camden as a heritage asset. Our approach to the design of this development has been guided by the need to protect and preserve those features of the building that contribute most to the character of the terrace and its architectural quality, balanced with the need to bring the building back into viable long-term use as a high quality single family dwelling, and the opportunity afforded by the reconstruction project to upgrade the performance of the building (in energy use and other terms) to meet or exceed current standards for new-build dwellings.

## Access

Existing access to the building is via a flight of five external steps at the front of the building up at the main entrance door, with one further step immediately on the threshold just outside the entrance. The existing main entrance door is quite generously sized, with a clear opening width of about 90cm. However, within the scope of this planning application and in consideration of the building's historic and townscape merit, it is not considered possible or desirable to alter the existing arrangement.

The existing house has a fairly complex internal arrangement with narrow, steep staircases giving access to the internal accommodation on a number of separate levels. One of the primary motivations for an extension and refurbishment project is to improve and rationalise (as far as possible) the internal accommodation at each floor level to a more generous layout with wider doorways and more spacious sanitary facilities, and for the new staircases to provide for slightly easier vertical circulation.

As such, the proposals are considered to be an improvement in accessibility terms.

## Summary

The enclosed planning application seeks permission to extend and alter an existing historic dwellinghouse, whilst also carrying out much needed works to reconstruct the building from its current derelict state and bring it back into the the available housing stock in the Borough. The design of the extensions and alterations have been carefully considered to respect and maintain the character of the local area and protect the amenity of local residents.

We trust that you will be able to support this application. If any further information is required, please contact Gavin Challand at gavin@catfishstudio.ltd.uk or on 07989 414971.